



REUNITED - (L) Darla Meade and (R) Majal Lee reunited for the first time in 33 years.

Reunion agency matches a mother and daughter

By Curtis Waterbury
of The Spotlight

It would be quite a strange feeling to come face to face with someone you haven't seen for 33 years. Especially if that person was your daughter.

Majal Lee, of Scappoose, could tell you all about it. She was reunited with her daughter, Darla Meade, on Oct. 20 for the first time since she put her up for adoption 33 years ago.

"The last time I held her hand was in the delivery room," said Majal, an accounting clerk.

She put her application in with International Soundex Reunion Registry, a match-up company out of Nevada, about a year and a half ago. Her daughter, Darla, a housewife in Kennewick, Wash., registered in September, and they were reunited in October.

After speaking on the telephone on Oct. 4, they finally met in person two weeks later.

"The initial phone call was pretty intense," said Majal. "But the meeting felt comfortable because we had already spoken to each other for two weeks.

"You can definitely tell she's my daughter," she said with a laugh. "She can out talk me, so I know we're related."

Giving up a child for adoption is a difficult task for anyone, and it's just about as difficult to make the decision to locate that child many years later.

"I can't even remember how long I held onto the clipping with Soundex's address on it," said Mr. Lee. "Being a single parent with two boys to take care of, I didn't think I could cope with anymore stressful factors."

Majal waited until her boys, Bryan, 25, and Gordan, 22, were on their own before she finally registered. The last time she saw her daughter, Darla was hours old.

She was 18-years-old when she gave Darla up for adoption. "I was headed for college and I wasn't ready for marriage," said Majal. "I didn't want to sign the certificate, but I put my own emotions aside and decided what was best for the child."

One obviously hopes that the child is brought up in a stable environment, but that is not always the case.

Darla's adoptive parents divorced when she was quite young. She did, however, still receive the loving care from her adoptive father.

"Her father is a blind piano tuner, and a very lovely man," said Majal. "Her stepmother is also very nice."

Majal is definitely pleased with her experience, but recommends that anyone who wants to locate children who were given up for adoption, that they use a non-intrusive company like Soundex.

"I don't recommend surprise reunions," she said. "If someone doesn't want to be contacted they have that right."

"I'm not her mother when it comes down to it, we're only related by birth. But hopefully a good relationship will come out of this."

November is National Adoption Month, and if anyone desires more information about Soundex, please contact International Soundex Reunion Registry at P.O. Box 2312, Carson City, Nev. 89702, 702-882-7755.